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ABSTRACT

This manual was initially written to support the University of South Dakota's Palm Initiative. It has been substantially revised and updated to include the latest in handheld applications with educational uses, and it applies to any Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) using the Palm OS Software (3.1 or higher) and having at least 8 megabytes of memory. This manual covers the following uses of the handheld computer: reading e-books; creating e-books from Word documents; reading, creating, and editing documents; database software; finding online information; putting course information on the handheld; Web clipping; installing and storing pictures and images; beaming data and applications; creating quizzes; maintaining gradebooks on the PDA; quick installation of applications and data; sharing information and applications; time management; and a list of URLs and books for current awareness on handhelds and their academic and informational applications. (AEF)

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Beyond the Organizer: A Manual of Educational Uses for the Handheld Computer

By: Carol A. Leibiger

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Beyond the Organizer:

A Manual of Educational Uses For the Handheld Computer

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This manual was initially written to support the University of South Dakota's Palm Initiative. It has been substantially revised and updated to include the latest in handheld applications with educational uses. It applies to any Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) using the Palm OS software (3.1 or higher) and having at least 8 MB of memory (i.e., most Palm and Handspring Visor handhelds, plus the Sony Clié).

Introduction

The Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), or handheld computer, is more than simply an organizer. It has a variety of uses that are useful in an instructional setting. This manual is intended to introduce students and teachers to education- and information-related uses of the handheld computer. As the title implies, it assumes a working knowledge of basic PDA functions. Your handheld's documentation should contain instructions for using its primary four functions (datebook, addressbook, to-do list, and memopad). In addition, the CD-ROM containing the Palm OS software for your PDA contains a detailed handbook with instructions for entering data and using the four functions. Please refer to these sources for introductory information on the handheld.

This manual covers the following uses of the handheld computer: reading e-books; reading, creating, and editing documents; database software, using Avantgo to find online information; putting course information on the handheld, web clipping, installing and storing pictures and images, beaming data and applications, creating quizzes, and URL's for current awareness on handhelds and their academic and informational applications.

Several of the applications described in this manual (e.g., the Palm Reader, Mobile DB, and Documents to Go) are available on the Palm Mobile Mentor Software CD-ROM, which can be bought less cheaply than the price of the individual applications. However, it is possible to obtain all of the applications described below from online sources, such as Palm.com. In addition, many of the applications (especially older versions) are available as freeware or shareware.

Two accessories that are absolutely essential for effective use of a handheld computer are a portable keyboard and a sturdy case. A keyboard will expand your ability to use the PDA for producing and editing documents without having to rely on a PC; this advantage, plus the resulting increased ease of use of the handheld will more than make up for the cost of the keyboard. Keyboards for most handheld devices are available from Targus (www.targus.com), which also sells a combined keyboard and PDA case. A sturdy case is essential for protecting your handheld from dirt and damage. Reasonably priced cases are available from the major PDA manufacturers and are well worth the investment.

Reading e-books

The advantages of reading e-books with the PDA might not be immediately obvious. However, the size of the handheld makes it very portable, and since text files are small, your PDA can actually hold quite a few books. (Some readers, such as the iSilo Reader, compress book texts and thus increase the number of books which the handheld can contain.) In addition, e-books are searchable (use your reader's "Find" command), and they can be bookmarked, both of which are advantages over paper books and which lend themselves to academic uses.

Before you can read a book with your handheld, you must load a reader onto it. Readers have differing features, so you might want to experiment with several and then settle on one or two for reading books. Readers can be obtained inexpensively or for free at the following sites:

Aportis	http://www.aportis.com
Bible Reader*	http://www.olivetree.com
CspotRun	http://www.32768.com/bill/palmos/cspotrun
iSilo	http://www.isilo.com
MarkMyScriptures**	http://www.skimware.com
Mobipocket Universal Reader	http://www.mobipocket.com
Palm Reader	http://www.peanutpress.com
Quickword***	http://www.cesinc.com/quickword
Qvadis Express Reader	http://www.qvadis.com
TealDoc	http://www.tealpoint.com/softdoc.htm
TK3 Reader	http://www.nightkitchen.com
TomeRaider	http://www.tomeraider.com
WordSmith***	http://www.bluenomad.com

*Use with Bibles from Olive Tree.
**While intended to be a Bible reader, MarkMyScriptures can read standard PDA files.
***These applications double as word-processing programs and text readers.

(See "Document Readers for the Palm OS: A User's Perspective" by Larry Stedman, in *PalmPower Magazine* [May 2001 can be accessed at

http://www.palmpower.com/issues/issue200105/ebook0501001.html, and June 2001 is located at http://www.palmpower.com/tocs/issue200106.html]. Also see "Books in the Palm of Your Hand" by Jamie Engle at http://www.ebookconnections.com/.)

Installing a reader: Go to the web site of your chosen reader, and follow the directions for downloading and installing it. It's best to download the reader to your desktop screen, just so that you can find it more easily when you want to install it later.

After the reader has been downloaded to your desktop, double-click on its icon to unzip the file. Click on "I Agree" on the WinZip window; you will then see a list of the contents of the reader's zip file. Not all of these files are essential for the PDA; usually, if you double-click on all files with the extensions *.prc* and *.pdb*, this is all the PDA needs. (Most applications/databases have a "readme" file with complete installation instructions.)

For each file that you double-click, the Palm Desktop install tool screen will appear, listing the application(s) and database(s) you want to install onto your PDA. Click "Done"; a screen indicating "The listed file(s) will be installed on the handheld when you next perform a HotSync operation" will appear. Click "OK". When you are finished, place your handheld into its cradle and press the HotSync button.

NOTE: Repeat this procedure for any application or database you want to install onto your PDA. It's important to remember to (1) download and (2) install the applications and databases onto your PC, then (3) install them onto the PDA. (You can use your Palm OS desktop program's installation tool or the Pilot-Install application to install applications to the PDA. See the section on P-Install below.)

EXCEPTION: After downloading the Mobipocket and Qvadis readers, double-clicking will open an installation wizard rather than the Palm Desktop install tool. Follow the directions given by the installation wizard. You will still need to HotSync the reader onto your handheld.

Finding and installing books: Generally, only books in the public domain are available free; books currently under copyright are obtainable from commercial e-booksellers. (Remember, before you can read an e-book on your PDA you need to have installed an e-book reader. Download and install the book onto your PC desktop screen, then double-click to activate the Palm Desktop's install tool. After you have performed your next HotSync, you will find your book located in your reader(s).)

The following URL's should prove helpful to you in understanding e-books and finding books for your handheld. Not all e-books are PDA-readable; many require conversion and some tweaking before they can be read on a handheld. In such cases, the conversion tools and their sources are noted.

Few current textbooks and reference works are available (the big exception is

medical books), but these sites can be a good source of cheap texts of classical and popular literature. (As PDA's become a more important and prevalent educational tool, it's hoped that publishers will be willing to venture into PDA textbook publishing.)

CAVEAT: The world of e-publishing is currently rather unstable. The following URL's are current and accurate as of the writing of this manual and, of course, do not reflect later changes in publishers, their addresses and URL's, or their publications. Also, this list cannot claim to offer complete information on the totality of e-publishing for the handheld computer.

Information and Important URL's

E-book Conference	http://www.itl.nist.gov/div895/ebook99
eBook Connections	http://www.ebookconnections.com
Open Directory Project	http://dmoz.org/Computers/E-Books/

Mega-Sites (Books available in multiple formats)

Alex Catalog of e-Texts (free)	http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/alex
eBookAd.com	http://www.ebookad.com
ebooks.com	http://www.ebooks.com

E-books (Download to your PC or convert to Palm-readable format)

Bartleby.com* (free)	http://www.bartleby.com
Fictionwise	http://www.fictionwise.com
MetaText**	http://www.metatext.com
MightyWords	http://www.mightywords.com
The On-line Books Page (free)	http://www.digital.library.upenn.edu/books
Project Gutenberg***(free)	http://www.gutenberg.net
Xlibris.Com	http://www1.xlibris.com

*The books on the Bartleby web site are in HTML format. They can be downloaded in this format to the PC or can be converted for the iSilo reader. See the section on "Web Clipping with iSilo" for more information and instructions.
**Contains limited numbers of older textbooks.
***Project Gutenberg texts can be converted to PDA-readable files using the DropBook desktop converter (available on Palm's Mobile Mentor software CD-ROM) or with the jmakeztxt converter available from GutenPalm at http://www.gutenpalm.sourceforge.net/. (At the same site, you can download the GutenPalm reader and zlib for handheld reading of Project Gutenberg texts.)

E-books in PDF format (Download to your PC or install to the PDA)*

Adobe eBooks Central	http://www.adobe.com/epaper/ebooks
Aportis	http://www.aportis.com
Christian Classics Ethereal Library	http://www.ccel.org
eBooks.com	http://www.ebooks.com

Franklin E-Bookman	http://www.franklin.com/ebookman
Internet Book Company**	http://www.internetbookco.com
Internet Public Library (free)	http://www.ipl.org/reading/books/index.html
Universal Publishers (nonfiction)	http://www.upublish.com

*There is a free Adobe Acrobat PDF Reader for the Palm OS at the Adobe Acrobat homepage (http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readerforpalm.html), or get a free PDF converter from Aportis (http://www.aportis.com/). PDF-to-Go is also available at Dataviz.com [http://www.datavis.com/buypalmgear].
**The Internet Book Company has many links to Project Gutenberg, whose texts are in ASCII format and require either the desktop DropBook converter or the ztxt converter to make them PDA-readable (see Project Gutenberg under "E-Books").

Books in PDA-readable format (no conversion necessary)

Allstory.com	http://www.allstory.com
Baen.com (sci-fi)	http://www.baen.com
Bookbooters.com	http://www.bookbooters.com
Bookmice Publishing	http://www.bookmicepublishingco.com
Bookrags*	http://www.bookrags.com/pda
CyberRead	http://www.cyberread.com
E-Book Library (free!)	http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/ebooks
HandHeldCrime**	http://www.handheldcrime.com
Hard Shell Word Factory	http://www.hardshell.com/ebooks.html
Mary Jo's E-Texts	http://www.dogpatch.org/etext.html
MemoWare***	http://www.memoware.com
Mobipocket eBookstore	http://www.mobipocket.com/en/eBooks
Night Kitchen	http://www.nightkitchen.com
Olive Tree Bible Software	http://www.olivetree.com
Online Originals	http://www.onlineoriginals.com
PDA Bookstore	http://www.pdabookstore.com
Peanut Press	http://www.peanutpress.com
Pocket Manager	http://www.pocketmanager.com/index.jsp
Qvadis	http://www.qvadis.com

*Requires Avantgo.
**HandHeldCrime also delivers texts via Avantgo.
***MemoWare has an extensive of list of Document Conversion Tools and Utilities.

Creating your own e-books

You can create your own e-books from MS Word documents, using the **word2pml.dot** macro and the Palm Dropbook application. The macro uses Palm Markup Language (PML) to retain the document's original formatting which the switch to Plain text would lose.

First, download and install the Word 97/98 template document word2pml.dot from the Palm Digital Media download site at http://www.peanutpress.com/makebook/index.cgi/converting. Do not follow the directions given at this site, as they are incomplete. Instead, follow these directions:

Save your document as a Word file (Word 95 or 97, since Palm Dropbook was created to work with Word 97). Open the file, and highlight and copy the text. Open Word and click on "New." Click on "word2pml" in the list of available templates and then click on "OK." Paste your text into the new document. From the "Tools" menu, select "Macro," then "Macros," then "word2pml." Click "Run." Save your document to your desktop as Plain text. Close your document.

Find your document on the desktop, and drag and drop it into the Palm Dropbook application. This will produce a PDB file for the handheld. HotSync the document to your PDA. Your document will be located in your reader.

Once you have created an e-book and installed it to your PDA, you can beam it. Simply open your reader, and open the text you want to beam. Tap the menu button, then tap on "Beam..." under "Book." On the "Beam" screen, highlight the text you want to beam, then tap "Beam." This will beam your text to a receiving handheld. See "Sharing information and applications" below for further details on beaming.

Reading, creating, and editing documents

Your PDA comes equipped with DocumentsToGo (DTG), a document reader and editor. DocumentsToGo consists of the applications WordToGo, which reads and edits MS Word documents, and SheetToGo, which reads and edits MS Excel spreadsheets. It's convenient if you also have DocumentsToGo on your PC. Word processing and editing are easily accomplished on the handheld, and DTG provides a convenient way to carry and edit documents when a laptop computer or PC is not available or convenient. In addition, assignments, worksheets, quizzes, etc. can be created on the desktop, installed to a handheld's DTG, beamed to students, and beamed back to an instructor when completed.

As you might expect by this point, reading and editing documents with a handheld requires a few more steps than doing the same thing with a PC. However, the advantages of being able to carry and edit documents on the PDA certainly outweigh this slight inconvenience.

You can create Word and Excel documents on your PDA, simply by entering the respective program and pressing "New". Use the handheld's keyboard to write your document. If you call up DocumentsToGo, you are prompted to choose whether to create a document with WordToGo or SheetToGo.

If you wish to transfer a document you have created or edited to your PC, you need to perform a Hot Sync so that the document in its current form makes its way to your PC DocumentsToGo program. Once you have synched the document onto your PC, open the PC's DocumentsToGo; the file in question should be listed in the contents. Click on the document you want to move, click on the "Move File" button on the toolbar. This will bring up your PC's "My Documents" file; you can now save the file as you wish.

You can also create and/or edit files on your PC and transfer them to your handheld. Save your document to your PC and exit the relevant program, then double-click on DocumentsToGo. Click on "Add Item" on the toolbar; this will open your "My Documents" file. Find and select the document you want for the PDA; click "Open", and it will appear in the DocumentsToGo contents. HotSync the document onto the handheld.

DocumentsToGo 4.0 contains SlideshowToGo, a PowerPoint reader. You can synch PowerPoint presentations onto your PDA and view them there. The slides must be moved about with the stylus for viewing, but the text of the slides can be viewed quite conveniently.

Database software

MobileDB allows databases to be created on the PC (for this, you need to have MoblieDB_PC in the computer) or the PDA (tap the "New" button, name your database, name your fields, and enter/edit data). New or edited databases can be synched onto the PDA (from the PC) or the PC (from the handheld).

MobileDB comes equipped with about fifty different databases, some complete with information (e.g., the 2000-01 NBA schedule) and some empty (e.g., recipe collection). Data can be synched into these databases from MS Excel or Access. You can also create your own databases with MobileDB_PC (click on "New" in the drop-down menu under "File). You can obtain additional databases for MobileDB from Handmark at http://www.handmark.com/ databases/index.html.

Finding online information

You can use the PDA to access information found in web sites using the Avantgo program that comes with your handheld. Simply register with Avantgo at http://www.avantgo.com. You'll be prompted to create an account and to choose channels which will be updated every time you HotSync. Additionally, you can create your own channels; choose web sites you commonly visit or those necessary for your personal and/or academic information needs. It is also possible to create custom channels for your own or a group's use; for instance, the University of South Dakota's Freshman Channel, containing course, campus, city, and state news and information is available at http://www.usd.edu/pda/.

Course information on the PDA

You can make course information available to your students in several ways: as an e-book, a PDF file, or as an HTML document. Any of these document types can be offered online, at your or your school's web site, and downloaded to a PC and then installed to a handheld. Follow the directions given above (under "Creating your own e-books") for writing and formatting MS Word documents as PDB files.

PDF files: Portable Document Format, or PDF, files are extremely stable, uneditable, and very compact. They also have a slick look and formatting that translates well to the smaller screen size of the PDA. Since both e-books and PDF files can be beamed, students without PC's can still obtain course materials from their instructor or a fellow student.

To read PDF files with a handheld, you must have the Adobe Acrobat Reader for the Palm OS installed to your handheld. This application, when downloaded and installed to your desktop, also installs the Adobe Acrobat PDF to PDB converter utility for the Palm OS to your desktop. Once the reader has been downloaded and installed to your desktop, you can HotSync it onto your Palm.

Download the desired PDF document to your PC desktop. Be sure to rename the document so you can find it later.

Open the Adobe Acrobat Reader for the Palm OS on your desktop. Click on "Add PDF to transfer list." This will open a dialog box with access to your PC's files. Change the location to "Desktop." Highlight the PDF file on your desktop screen; click on "Open."

In the "Preferences" dialog box, check "Keep Images in full size," then "Apply to all." (If you want a smaller file on your handheld and don't particularly want or need to have images included, click on "Remove Images" rather than "Keep Images in full size" under "Preferences.") In the "About tagged PDF" dialog box, click on "OK." Once the PDF file has been added to your transfer list (i.e., once the "Add PDF file to transfer list" dialog box has disappeared), press the HotSync button on your handheld's cradle. Once the HotSync is complete, exit the Adobe Acrobat Reader for the Palm OS desktop program. The PDF file will be located in the Adobe Acrobat Reader on your PDA.

NOTE: You may receive the error message "Synchronization generated one or more messages. Please see the HotSync Log for details." If you click on "View Log" you will see an Install Error that reads "There is no card present in the SecureDigital (SD) card slot. Install to card synchronization failed." Do not worry about this message—the document will still be installed in the Adobe Acrobat Reader on your Palm.

Web clipping

Web clipping allows you to take information from the Internet and install it to your PDA by removing HTML language and thus reducing file size to fit onto a handheld. To do web clipping, you need both the iSilo Reader and an iSilo desktop conversion program to strip HTML language from the web sites you wish to install to the handheld. You can obtain the iSilo Reader 3.11 and its desktop companion iSiloX as shareware from the iSilo web site (http://www.isilo.com). Alternatively, you can also download the iSilo Free reader and the desktop converter iSilo Web as freeware, from the "old" iSilo site (http://www.isilo.com/old/index.htm). Whichever combination you choose, you cannot mix and match handheld readers and desktop programs, so be careful to download the correct desktop program for the reader you obtain. Since the free reader is more than adequate for most purposes, the following directions apply to downloading, installing, and using it with iSilo Web. (The procedure for iSilo 3.01 and iSiloX is very similar.)

Download the iSilo Free Reader from the iSilo web site (http://www.isilo.com/old/index.htm) to your PC's desktop. On your PC's desktop, double-click on the iSiloF zip icon. Once the file is unzipped, double-click on iSilo.prc. The Palm Desktop Install Tool will open, and you should see iSilo.prc listed. Click "Done," then "OK" on the Install Tool dialog box which appears next. HotSync the application onto your Palm. (You should probably also install the iSiloManual.pdb file, if you have room.)

Download the iSiloWeb desktop program from the iSilo web site (http://www.isiloX.com/old/index.htm) to your PC's desktop. Double-click on iSiloWeb.exe to open the program. Under "Channel," click on "Add file" or "Add web," depending on whether you wish to install your own HTML file (from your PC) or a web site to your handheld, respectively. Clicking on "Add file" will open a "Channel Source" dialog box; highlight the file in question and click on "Open." If you click on "Add web," an "Add web channel" dialog box will open, into which you can type or paste the URL of the web site you wish to install. Under "Channel," highlight the file you wish to install and click on "Convert." Once the iSilo Conversion Process box has cleared, your document should be listed in the original iSilo program. Click on "OK." HotSync the file onto your Palm. The file will be located in your iSilo Reader. (See the use of the FirePad Suite to install web pages with images, under "Installing images," below.)

Installing images

FirePad is an application that allows you to install images (picture files and web pages with images) to your handheld. Simply download the FirePad Viewer Suite from the FirePad web site (http://www.firepad.com/) and install it; this will install the Fire Converter to your desktop and the Fire Viewer to your Palm OS desktop program's install tool. HotSync the Fire Viewer onto your PDA.

Installing images: To convert images for your handheld, open the Fire Converter and click on the type of image you wish to convert (image or URL). To convert a picture image, decide on the color mode and compression values, determine the desired size ("Resize" will allow you force the picture to the dimensions of the PDA screen), then name your image. Click on "Open," and the program will open "My Documents." Find your stored picture file, then click on "Open." This will preview the picture, allowing you to make adjustments in image size and/or color. Once you are satisfied with the picture's appearance, click on "Save." Once the image has been saved, exit the application.

Find the image in "My Pictures" (in "My Documents"); in addition to the original image (JPEG or BITMAP file), you will recognize a Palm OS file. Double-click on it, and it will open the Palm OS desktop Install Tool. Click on "Done," and press your handheld's HotSync button. The image will be in the Fire Viewer application.

Installing web pages: Open the Fire Converter desktop program and click on "Convert URL." Paste in the URL of the web page you want to install, then click on "Add," and designate the number or depth of links you want the converter to allow (the less the links, the smaller the file). Once the conversion is complete, click on "Save," and the program will indicate that the web page will be installed to the PDA during the next HotSync operation. Click on "OK" and exit the application. HotSync the web page to your handheld; it will be located in the Fire Viewer.

Quizzes

The Quizzler application allows you to create (real or practice) quizzes for the PDA. Simply download the free Quizzler application from the Quizzler web site (http://www.QuizzlerPro.com). At the same site, you can download a thirty-day trial of the QuizzlerMaker desktop application, which contains a PRC file with the Quizzler handheld application which can be installed to your PDA.

You can use the Quizzler Maker to create quizzes on your PC and then install them to your handheld; from there they can be beamed to students for quiz administration and beamed back for grading (the program allows you to set the quiz so that students cannot beam it, thus preventing cheating). Simply open the program and fill in the blanks with the author's name, quiz information, and quiz questions. The program will prompt you to type in the correct answer first, followed by the incorrect answer(s); the program can be set to give the questions and answers in random or set order, to repeat questions answered incorrectly, and with a choice of question formats (multiple choice, true-false, fill-in-the blank, or reverse questions). Once you have completed the quiz, you can save it and install it to your handheld.

If you prefer not to invest in the Quizzler Maker once the trial is over, you can still use your handheld's Quizzler application to create quizzes. Simply use your PDA's Memo Pad to create the text of the quiz, and then import it into Quizzler. You'll need to

use some simple programming to format the quiz for the Quizzler program. Using your Memo Pad, begin a new memo in the following way (typing in parentheses indicates information you need to supply, without the parentheses):

#quizzler
#name (your quiz' name)
#Questions begin below
(first question)
(answers, correct answer first, separated by semicolons)
(second question)
(answers, correct answer first, separated by semicolons)
(etc.)

Example:

#quizzler
#name Carol's Pets
Carol's first pet was
a goldfish;a cat;a dog;a parrot
Carol's children had a cat named
Muffy;Fluffy;Scruffy;Melisande

When you have typed your quiz, tap "Done" and go the applications screen. Once there, tap "Quizzler." On the "Quiz List" screen, tap "Import." This will take you to the Memo Pad; highlight the quiz (marked #quizzler) and tap "Convert." Once the conversion is complete, you will be returned to Quizzler's Quiz List. You can preview your quiz by highlighting it and tapping "Quiz." The screen that appears will allow the quiz taker to set the sequence of questions (in order or random), the type of question (multiple choice, true-false, fill-in, and reverse), as well as the speed and repeating questions answered incorrectly. These features make Quizzler an ideal application for practice tests, since students can repeat the quizzes, obtain their scores, vary the format, repeat questions, and introduce timed questions once they are surer of the quiz content.

Gradebooks on the PDA

You can maintain a grade book using either Sheet to Go (part of Documents to Go) or Mobilie DB. Both applications have a desktop program that eases data entry. See "Database software" and "Reading, creating, and editing documents" above for information and instructions on using MobileDB and Sheet to Go, respectively. A more powerful gradebook program (with features like weighting of grades, and the ability to calculate mean scores within the application) is the Tiny Red Book. A free thirty-day trial version is available at http://www.tiny-red-book.com/.

Quick installation of applications and data

After you've grown accustomed to your PDA, you'll probably come to the realization that you don't always need to update all of your handheld's files with every HotSync operation. In fact, this can slow down your use of the PDA, especially if you haven't update information and simply want to install an application or a new file to your handheld. In this case, you can disable the applications you don't want or need to update by opening your Palm OS desktop program, clicking on "HotSync" on the upper toolbar, and clicking on "Custom" in the drop-down menu. A "Custom" dialog box will appear, allowing you to change the default settings for HotSync. Any change you make will apply to the next HotSync operation only.

A quicker, "cooler" way to HotSync applications and/or files onto your PDA without updating all of your handheld's files (or disabling them with a custom HotSync) is to use Pilot Install (or P-Install). This application, available free at the evi.com web site (http://pinstall.envicon.de/e/), allows you to HotSync files to your handheld without using the Palm OS desktop program.

Simply download and install P-Install to your desktop. Have the file(s) you want to install to your PDA available on your desktop, then simply open the P-Install application, drag and drop the file to be installed into P-Install, and press your cradle's HotSync button. Your handheld's files will not be updated; the new file will simply be installed.

Sharing information and applications

The Palm OS software allows data and applications to be shared via beaming. (The only applications that cannot be beamed are the basic four functions (datebook, addressbook, to-do list, and memo) which come with the PDA.)

To beam information or an application, the sending and receiving handhelds need to be between 4-39 inches (10 cm.-1 m.) apart, with the infrared beaming (IR) ports unobstructed and pointing at each other.

To beam data, call up the record you wish to beam. Tap the menu icon, then tap "Record" and the appropriate beam command. A Beam Status dialog box will appear, indicating that the PDA is searching for a receiving handheld. A further dialog box will indicate whether the beaming was successful.

To beam an application, tap the applications icon, then call up the application you wish to beam. Tap the menu icon and then the appropriate beam command (if you have an expansion card inserted into the PDA, you will be asked whether to beam from the handheld or from the card). The Beam Status dialog box will indicate whether the beaming was successful.

To receive beamed data or applications, be sure that your handheld is set to receive beamed information. (On the applications screen, tap "Preferences", then "General" in the drop-down menu. Beam receive should be set to "On" to receive a beam. Turn the "Beam Receive" off between beamings to conserve your battery.) Be sure that your Palm is pointing at the sending PDA, that it is the proper distance from the other machine, and that there are no obstructions blocking the beam. A Beam dialog box will appear, asking whether you want to accept the data or application being beamed. Tap "Yes" and indicate the category to which you want the data/application assigned.

CAVEAT: Be sure to practice "safe beaming." Be aware that if you include financial or sensitive personal information in a file that you then beam, you are sharing that information with the recipient of the beamed file.

Time management

The PDA is useful not only for academic content of courses, but for time management as well. Students and teachers can use the datebook function to manage their appointments and assignments; data entry is easy with the Palm OS desktop program (the datebook is the default start screen) or with a handheld keyboard.

There are also time management applications available at reasonable prices. 4.0 Student, available from Handmark (http://www.handmark.com/products/40student/). allows students to track assignments and due dates, list and project grades, and store course information. Thought Manager for Education, despite its 1984-sounding name, is a very helpful application that aids teachers and students in organizing the content of assignments (from the outline to the finished product). It also contains a valuable list of paper topics organized around contemporary issues. Thought Manager has both a teacher's and a student's version, with a desktop program that eases data entry. It is available at a reasonable price from Hands High Software (http://www.handshigh.com/). There are free trial versions of both 4.0 Student and Thought Manager obtainable at the respective product web sites.

Current awareness

To keep up with what's new and cool in the world of handheld computers, visit product websites (many of which offer free e-newsletters) and the following information/newsletter sites:

Active Buyer's Guide	http://www5.pdas.activebuyersguide.com
eBook Connections	http://www.ebookconnections.com
Handheld Computing	http://www.hhcmag.com
Happy Palm	http://www.palmstation.com
Mark's Palm Place (M500)	http://users.nac.net/mgc/palmplace.html
Mobile Computing Online	http://www.mobilecomputing.com

Palm Infocenter	http://www.palminfocenter.com
Palm Power Magazine	http://www.palmpower.com
Palm Tipsheet	http://www.palmtipsheet.com
Palm Station	http://www.palmstation.com
PDA Geek Newsletter	http://www.geek.com/pdageek/pdamain.htm
PDA Street	http://www.pdastreet.com
Pocket PC Magazine	http://www.pocketpcmag.com
Ron Nicholson's Palm Computing Information Page*	http://www.nicholson.com/rhn/palm
The Gadgeteer	http://www.the-gadgeteer.com
Woody's Palm Watch	http://www.woodyswatch.com/palm

*Ron Nicholson's Palm Computing Information Page is an excellent source of information on all aspects of Palm and Pocket PC computing, with many valuable links.

(This list is by no means complete. It represents a smattering of the informational sites on PDA's, applications and handheld-related products, and their use that are available on the Web. The author would appreciate being notified of new and valuable web sites on handhelds and their academic and informational uses.)

Bibliography

These books are recommended introductions to handhelds using Palm OS software. They offer a brief history of the PDA, as well as information on the basic uses of the PDA's and some advanced applications.

Broida, Rick and Dave Johnson. *How to Do Everything With Your Visor.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000.

Butter, Andrea and David Pogue. *Piloting Palm: The Inside Story of Palm, Handspring, and the Birth of the Billion-Dollar Handheld Industry.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002.

Dyszel, Bill. *Palm for Dummies.* Indianapolis: Hungry Minds, 2000.

Johnson, Dave. *How to Do Everything With Palm.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000.

Pogue, David. *Palm Pilot: The Ultimate Guide.* Cambridge, MA: O'Reilly & Associates, 1999.

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